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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PM/PPA DONNA HOPKINS AND DAVID FORAN

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TAGS: [EWWT](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHSA](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#) [IR](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA PIRACY: FRENCH FAVOR INCLUSIVE
APPROACH BUT WANT CONTROL MECHANISM TO PROHIBIT CERTAIN
COUNTRIES FROM PARTICIPATING

REF: STATE 66632

Classified By: Andrew Young, Political Counselor, 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: France favors broad participation in anti-piracy activities off the Horn of Africa as outlined reftel, but would prefer that a mechanism, "based on objective criteria," be established that would allow current participants to reject "problem states" such as Iran from participating should such states show an interest in joining on-going and future operations. One possible formulation would be to limit participation to those countries not encumbered by UN sanctions for maritime-related activities, which would theoretically prohibit Iran from participating, but without having to name Iran specifically. END SUMMARY,

¶2. (C) We reviewed reftel issues with Guillaume Dabouis (MFA EUR/RPM-equivalent desk officer) on July 17. He said the GOF shared USG thinking as expressed in reftel para 7 points, and supported broad international participation in Horn of Africa anti-piracy efforts, but with an exception. The GOF appreciated that the USG had taken French concerns about Iran's possible interest in participating into account in crafting reftel para 7 points. He reiterated France's concern about Iranian participation. "Maybe we would think differently if the recent election had turned out better and if Iran had not arrested French people. But those are the realities now. We would not want to give them another forum where they could be a negative element." MFA Anti-Piracy Chief Chantal Poirot and her MOD counterpart Vice Admiral Arnaud de Tarle separately shared concerns about Iranian participation with PolCouns.

¶3. (C) Dabouis said the French were trying to craft language that would replace the final paragraph in reftel para 7 points. The aim would be to develop "objective criteria" for participation rather than the less specific framework contained in reftel para 7's current final paragraph. Such criteria could also be crafted so as to enable the Contact Group to prohibit participation by a country without naming it specifically. Dabouis said that MFA Anti-Piracy Chief Chantal Poirot had earlier devised a formula whereby countries subject to UN sanctions concerning non-proliferation would be barred from participating, but Germany had objected, pointing out that such a provision could bar Somalia itself. Dabouis said that the French had raised the issue of excluding countries with PM/PPA Donna Hopkins on July 10. Dabouis said that the GOF was now trying to base exclusion on a country's being subject to maritime-related international sanctions -- Iran was apparently one such country because of alleged smuggling

activities.

¶4. (C) Instead of phrasing exclusion in the negative -- "countries encumbered with XYZ UN or other international sanctions cannot participate" -- the controlling text should operate on a more positive basis -- "all countries are welcome to participate except those currently subject to UN or other international sanctions." Dabouis said that sanctions need not be the sole criterion, noting that countries under formal investigation (as "subjects of interest") could also be prohibited from participating.

¶5. (C) Dabouis thanked the U.S. for its helpful approach and he welcomed further USG thinking on how to broaden international participation in anti-piracy programs but at the same time to maintain an "out clause" so as to avoid being obliged to let countries such as Iran into the coalition.

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